

Stephen's Final Sermon and Martyrdom



Explore the faith, courage, and grace of Stephen as he preaches boldly and embraces martyrdom in Acts 6-7.

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Introduction

The story of Stephen in the Book of Acts is one of profound faith, boldness, and sacrifice. ✨ As the first Christian martyr, Stephen's life and death provide a compelling example of unwavering trust in God, even in the face of persecution and suffering. His final sermon, recorded in **Acts 7**, offers a rich tapestry of Israel's history, highlighting God's faithfulness while exposing the hardness of those who reject Him. Stephen's spirit-filled proclamation not only challenges his listeners but also calls believers today to consider their own faith and witness.

Stephen's story begins with his appointment as one of the seven deacons, chosen to serve the early church by managing charitable distributions. However, he quickly became known for performing miraculous signs and speaking with wisdom and the Spirit (Acts 6:8). This drew the ire of certain opposition groups who accused him of blasphemy. Yet, instead of defending himself with mere human arguments, Stephen delivered a powerful sermon recounting God's dealings with His people throughout history, culminating in a call to repentance and faith.

Despite intense hostility, Stephen's faith did not waver. As he was stoned to death, he demonstrated the grace of Christ by praying for his enemies, echoing Jesus' example on the cross. His martyrdom marks a pivotal moment in the early church, igniting widespread persecution but also fueling the spread of the gospel.



This 7-day study invites you to walk through Stephen's sermon and final moments, learning from his example of courage, forgiveness, and trust in God's justice. May his story inspire you to stand firm in your faith and reflect Christ's love and boldness in every circumstance. 📖 🙏





Day 1: The Spirit-Filled Servant



Day 1: 🔥 The Spirit-Filled Servant

Your Verse

Acts 6:8 - "Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Acts 6:3 - "Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom."*
- *2 Timothy 1:7 - "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."*



Day 1: 🔥 The Spirit-Filled Servant

Devotional: Stephen: Empowered by the Holy Spirit

Stephen's servant heart was marked by God's grace and power. Before his final sermon and martyrdom, Stephen was known for wisdom, Spirit-filled boldness, and miraculous deeds that served the early church and drew attention from many.

What does it mean to be 'full of God's grace and power'? For Stephen, it was living a life surrendered to God's Spirit, demonstrating love through service and speaking truth with courage. His example reminds us that God equips His servants not with human strength but with supernatural power that transforms lives.

As you begin this study, reflect on how the Holy Spirit empowers you to serve and witness in your everyday life. Are you open to His leading to be bold yet loving? Stephen's life calls us to embrace our role in God's mission with confidence and compassion.



Day 1: 🔥 The Spirit-Filled Servant

Reflect and Apply

1. How do you sense the Holy Spirit equipping you in your current season?

2. In what ways can you serve your community with grace and power?

3. What fears might you need to surrender to God to witness boldly?



Day 1: 🔥 The Spirit-Filled Servant

Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you felt empowered by God's Spirit.

2. List areas where you desire more courage and wisdom from the Holy Spirit.

3. Describe how you can serve others as Stephen did.



Day 1: 🔥 The Spirit-Filled Servant

Prayer for Today

Lord, fill me with Your Spirit just as You filled Stephen. Empower me to serve with grace and boldness, to stand firm in truth, and to reflect Your love in all I do. Help me to trust Your power over my own fear and weakness. May I be a faithful witness, even when challenges arise. *In Jesus' name, Amen.* 🙏👉💪



Day 2: A Bold Defense of Faith



Your Verse

Acts 7:2 - "To this he replied: 'Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran.'"

Supporting Scriptures

- *Hebrews 11:8 - "By faith Abraham... obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance."*
- *Joshua 1:9 - "Be strong and courageous... for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*



Devotional: Courage Rooted in God's Faithfulness

Stephen begins his sermon with a recounting of Abraham's call and God's faithfulness to His promises. This opening sets the tone for Stephen's bold defense, showing God's ongoing work through history.

Stephen's address was not a passive recount but a challenging proclamation. He reminds his listeners that God is always active and calls His people to trust and obedience. Despite threats, Stephen courageously testifies to God's faithfulness, anchoring his message in the Scriptures his audience held dear.

In our own lives, we face situations where defending our faith requires courage and clarity. Stephen's example encourages us to ground our witness in God's story and promises, trusting that God will guide our words.



Day 2:  A Bold Defense of Faith

Reflect and Apply

1. How does knowing God's faithfulness in history strengthen your faith today?

2. When has God called you to be bold in speaking His truth?

3. What Scriptures give you courage when facing opposition?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you needed courage to share your faith.

2. List Bible stories or verses that remind you of God's faithfulness.

3. Reflect on how God has guided you when you felt afraid.



Day 2: 📖 A Bold Defense of Faith

Prayer for Today

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness through all generations. Help me to boldly proclaim Your truth, trusting You will guide and protect me. Strengthen my heart to be courageous in sharing my faith, just as Stephen was. May Your word be a light on my path and my shield in times of trial. *In Jesus' name, Amen.* 📖 🛡️ 💡





Day 3: 🔍 God's Presence and Patience



Your Verse

Acts 7:30 - "After forty years, God appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in a flame of fire in a bush."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Exodus 3:2 - "There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush."*
- *Psalms 103:8 - "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."*



Devotional: Trusting God's Timing and Presence

Stephen's sermon highlights God's patient presence with His people. The appearance to Moses in the burning bush speaks of God's intimate involvement and timing in redeeming His people.

God does not rush but moves in His perfect timing, often working through seasons of waiting. Like Moses, we may experience long periods of uncertainty or challenge, but God's presence remains constant. Stephen's reminder encourages believers to trust God's timing and remain faithful.

Reflecting on this, consider areas in your life where you need to trust God's patient love amid waiting or hardship. Stephen's example shows enduring faith anchored in God's unchanging nature.



Reflect and Apply

1. Where have you experienced God's patient presence recently?

2. How can you grow in trusting God's timing during difficult seasons?

3. What helps you remember God's compassion when you're discouraged?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time you waited on God and saw His faithfulness.

2. List ways you can remind yourself of God's presence daily.

3. Reflect on what it means that God is 'slow to anger' toward you.



Day 3: 🔍 God's Presence and Patience

Prayer for Today

Lord, thank You for Your constant presence and patience with me. Help me to trust Your timing and remain faithful when I feel uncertain or discouraged. Teach me to rest in Your compassion and love, just as Moses experienced Your holiness at Sinai. Give me endurance and peace today. *In Jesus' name, Amen.* 🌿 🔥 ❤️





Day 4: 🧑🏿🧑🏿 Rejection of God's Messengers



Your Verse

Acts 7:51 - "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

Supporting Scriptures

- *Matthew 23:37 - "How often I have longed to gather your children together... but you were not willing."*
- *Psalms 95:8 - "Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah."*



Devotional: Guarding Against a Hardened Heart

Stephen rebukes his audience for rejecting God's messengers, echoing the pattern of Israel's resistance throughout history. His words confront not only past disobedience but present hardness of heart.

Resisting the Holy Spirit is a serious condition that hinders our relationship with God and His work in us. Stephen's pointed accusation calls for self-examination—are there ways we resist God's leading today? Are our hearts open or hardened?

Although Stephen's message was difficult, it serves as a reminder that repentance opens the door for God's transformative work. God desires a responsive heart, ready to listen, obey, and receive His grace.



Reflect and Apply

1. In what ways might you be resisting the Holy Spirit right now?

2. How can you cultivate sensitivity to God's voice and leading?

3. What steps can you take to soften your heart toward God?



Journaling Prompts

1. Reflect on moments when you ignored God's promptings.

2. Write a prayer asking God to soften your heart.

3. Identify obstacles in your life that resist God's work.



Day 4: 👤 Rejection of God's Messengers

Prayer for Today

Holy Spirit, search my heart and reveal any resistance within me. Help me to be receptive and obedient to Your leading. Soften places hardened by fear, pride, or doubt, and renew a willing spirit that seeks to glorify God in all things. Teach me to hear and respond to Your voice daily. *In Jesus' name, Amen.* ❤️ 🙏 🌬️





Day 5: The Cost of Witnessing



Your Verse

Acts 7:54 - "When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him."

Supporting Scriptures

- *2 Timothy 3:12 - "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."*
- *Matthew 5:10 - "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*



Day 5: ❤️ The Cost of Witnessing

Devotional: Faithfulness Despite Opposition

Stephen's bold sermon provoked fierce opposition, illustrating the high cost of standing boldly for Christ. His faithfulness led to charges of blasphemy and ultimately, martyrdom.

Witnessing for Christ can invite rejection, hostility, or suffering. Yet, Stephen's story also reveals the blessing and eternal significance of such perseverance. He shows us that standing for truth may come with a cost, but God honors those who remain faithful.

Today's reflection invites believers to prepare their hearts for potential trials and to remember that suffering for righteousness is part of the Christian journey. Like Stephen, we can face opposition with courage, empowered by the Spirit.



Reflect and Apply

1. Have you experienced opposition for your faith? How did you respond?

2. What encourages you to remain faithful when faced with trials?

3. How can you support others who suffer for their witness?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about your own experiences with opposition or rejection.

2. List ways to stay spiritually strong during challenging times.

3. Consider how Stephen's example inspires your faith journey.



Day 5: ❤️ The Cost of Witnessing

Prayer for Today

Lord, grant me strength when I face opposition for Your name. Help me to stand firm like Stephen, fearless and filled with Your Spirit. May Your presence bring peace that surpasses understanding even in trials. Teach me to see suffering as an opportunity to glorify You. *In Jesus' name, Amen.* 🕊️ 🛡️





Day 6: 🙏 Stephen's Prayer of Forgiveness



Your Verse

Acts 7:60 – "Then he fell on his knees and cried out, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he fell asleep."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Luke 23:34 – "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."*
- *Romans 12:14 – "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."*



Devotional: Grace to Forgive Like Stephen

In his final moments, Stephen exemplifies Christ's love by asking God to forgive his persecutors. His prayer echoes Jesus' words on the cross, demonstrating the radical grace of forgiveness in suffering.

Forgiveness does not minimize hurt but releases the power of bitterness and vengeance. Stephen's example challenges believers to respond to offense and pain with mercy. This act of grace is a testimony to God's transformative power in the heart.

Consider areas in your life where forgiveness may be needed, either toward others or yourself. Stephen's prayer invites us to reflect God's mercy even in the hardest circumstances.



Reflect and Apply

1. Who do you need to forgive in your life?

2. How can forgiving others free you from bitterness?

3. What helps you pray for those who harm you?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a situation where you struggled to forgive.

2. Reflect on God's forgiveness toward you.

3. Pray for the grace to forgive and love your enemies.



Day 6: 🙏 Stephen's Prayer of Forgiveness

Prayer for Today

Jesus, teach me to forgive as You forgive. Help me to release resentment and pray blessings over those who hurt me. Fill my heart with Your peace and grace so I can love even when it is difficult. May Your forgiveness shape my words and actions today. *In Your holy name, Amen.* 💖🕊️✝️





Day 7: ✨ Living Stephen's Legacy



Day 7: ✨ Living Stephen's Legacy

Your Verse

Acts 7:59-60 - "While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he fell on his knees..."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Hebrews 12:1 - "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."*
- *2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - "Therefore we do not lose heart..."*



Day 7: ✨ Living Stephen's Legacy

Devotional: Persevering Faith in Life and Death

Stephen's martyrdom sets a profound example of perseverance, faith, and hope. Even as he faced death, he entrusted his spirit to Jesus and prayed for mercy on his enemies.

His legacy inspires believers to live courageously, to endure trials, and to keep their eyes fixed on eternity. Through Stephen's story, we learn that faithfulness to God is worth every cost and that our witness impacts generations.

As you conclude this study, reflect on how you can embody Stephen's courage and grace in daily life. What legacy of faith will you leave? May you be empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a bold witness for Christ.



Reflect and Apply

1. How can Stephen's example influence your daily faith journey?

2. What legacy of faith do you want to leave for others?

3. How does hope in eternity shape how you endure hardships?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about what perseverance in faith means to you.

2. Reflect on how you can demonstrate grace under pressure.

3. Set spiritual goals inspired by Stephen's example.



Day 7: ✨ Living Stephen's Legacy

Prayer for Today

Lord Jesus, help me to live with the courage and grace of Stephen. Strengthen my faith to persevere through challenges and keep my eyes fixed on You. Let my life be a testimony of Your love and power, impacting others for Your kingdom. Receive my spirit and guide me each day. *In Your name, Amen.* ✨





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